

# Digital Signature Development Status – 10/21/02

## Overview

- Digital Signatures require the issuing of “Certificates” to each user so that it is possible to authenticate a users signature
- NOAA is in the process of piloting this technology
  - Two NOAA working groups setup last spring
    - Certificate Policy Working Group
    - Private Key Infrastructure Technical Working Group
  - Effort is lead by the NOAA Office of the CIO
- NESDIS and OFA have demonstrated the greatest need for this particular technology, but other offices would use it should it become available
- Technical deployment needs to mirror policy development (you can’t have a digital signature system without both pieces in place)

## Plan of Action

- Draft of Certificate Policy (3-6 months from now to completion)
  - Certificate Policy Working Group charged with writing a Certificate Policy (CP) that is compatible with the Federal Bridge CP
  - The CP will need to be sent to the General Counsel’s Office for legal review
- Pilot Digital Certificates in NOAA (6-9 months from now to completion)
  - Pilot an in-house Certificate Authority (CA)
    - NOAA has signed a CREDA with a private company to setup and test an in-house CA in the NOAA Office of the CIO
    - The CA will start issuing digital certificates within the next three months
  - Pilot an out-source Certificate Authority
    - Select a third party vendor and procure digital certificates
    - Testing of third party digital certificates to ensure compatibility
  - Test each pilot with various enterprise applications
    - Secure E-mail
    - Secure Web Systems
    - Electronic Forms
- Evaluate the Pilots (9-12 months from now to completion)
  - Determine the costs and benefits of deploying each of the pilot options on a NOAA enterprise scale
  - Secure resources necessary to implement the method selected for issuing digital certificates for the NOAA enterprise
- Deploy Digital Certificates for the NOAA Enterprise (no completion data set)